



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
For Immediate Release: Sept. 30, 2005

Contact: Jenni Garrison
(202) 208-6502

SECRETARY NORTON AWARDS 2005 NATIONAL TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA® AWARD WINNERS AT DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR CEREMONY

Outstanding Public Land Volunteer Groups and Individuals, Including America The Beautiful Fund and The Walt Disney Co., Receive Awards

WASHINGTON – The 2005 National Take Pride in America Award winners were honored at a ceremony today in Washington, D.C. The recipients are individuals and groups from across the country recognized for their outstanding contributions to our public lands. Interior Secretary Gale Norton, USA Freedom Corps Director Desiree Sayle and Take Pride in America Executive Director Marti Allbright commended the volunteers during the Department of Interior event. Clint Eastwood, Take Pride spokesman, addressed the audience via a recorded video message.

"Across America, there are people performing their civic duty. The individuals we honor today have surpassed simple duty and gone on to achieve excellence," Secretary Norton said about the honorees. "Today's winners have given their time, their labor and their commitment to the lands that belong to all Americans. It is these citizens who make this Nation great."

Presented annually, the Take Pride in America national awards recognize specific volunteer projects and efforts in a variety of categories. These awards honor those who best maintain and enhance our public lands, including parks, forests, grasslands, reservoirs, wildlife refuges, cultural and historic sites, local playgrounds, and other recreation areas. This year marks the third year the National Awards have been given, and the 25 award recipients represent 16 states.

"The winners that we celebrate today truly demonstrate the mission of Take Pride. They all embraced the spirit of cooperative conservation by working with other organizations and individuals to accomplish a shared goal," Allbright said. "At Take Pride, we're thrilled to have volunteers of this caliber who embody the message of stewardship across our shared lands. It's an honor to recognize these individuals for their efforts."

The America the Beautiful Fund was honored for its exceptional contributions to the program with the Outstanding Take Pride in America Partner Award. Two of their accomplishments this year include providing \$1,000,000 worth of flower, vegetable and herb seeds to volunteers to plant community and school gardens that will grow more than six million pounds of food. From June 2004 through June 2005, there were 2,240 Take Pride in America Gardens planted throughout all 50 states. These projects brought together more than 1,000,000 volunteers. Nanine Bilski, President of the America the Beautiful Fund, accepted the award today.

A special Spirit of Take Pride in America award was presented to Kym Murphy, senior vice president of Environmental Policy at The Walt Disney Company. The award is not an annual award, but is presented by the executive director only in those years when someone's efforts on behalf of Take Pride in America merit special recognition.

-- MORE --

"Kym Murphy and the Walt Disney Company truly partner with the Take Pride program," Allbright said. "Their consistent generosity and long-standing history with Take Pride demonstrate that it's not just a business decision, but a commitment to reaching those individuals who can make a difference with Take Pride."

This year's recipients include:

Federal Land Manager Awards

- Jeff Brune, Bureau of Land Management; Anchorage, AK
- Mark H. Woods, National Park Service; Middlesboro, KY
- Mark J. Musaus, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Boynton Beach, FL
- Valerie J. Curley, Bureau of Reclamation; Fresno, California
- Marsha Kearney, U.S. Forest Service; FL

Individual Awards

- Darryll and Terri Wade; Ely, NV
- Dona Horan; Boise, ID

Youth Award

- Girl Scout Troop 187 and 506, Heart of Ohio; Cutler, OH

School Program Awards

- Deer Creek Elementary School; Edmond, OK
- Rock Springs High School Environmental Students; Rock Springs, WY
- Des Moines Area Community College, Biology 172; Des Moines, IA

Non-Profit Awards

- Continental Divide Trail Alliance; MT, ID, CO, WY, NM
- Morris Land Conservancy's Partners for Parks Programs; NJ
- The National Public Lands Day Program; nationwide

Public/Private Partnership Awards

- Friends of Anahuac Refuge; Anahuac, TX
- San Geronio Wilderness Association; San Bernardino, CA
- Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary Restoration Project; St. Paul, MN

Corporate Awards

- Tauck World Discovery; nationwide
- Toyota Motor Sales, USA; nationwide

Outstanding Take Pride in America Partner Award

- America the Beautiful Fund; nationwide

Local Government Award

- City of Colorado Springs Parks; Colorado Springs, CO

State Volunteer Program Awards

- Take Pride in Florida; Tallahassee, FL
- Texas Master Naturalist Program; TX

--MORE--

Federal Volunteer Program Awards

- Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park; Hagerstown, MD/ Washington DC
- Southern Nevada Interagency Volunteer Program; Las Vegas, NV

Spirit of Take Pride Award

- Kym Murphy, Senior Vice President of Environmental Policy, The Walt Disney Company

Audio recordings of Executive Director Allbright and select award recipients will be available on Monday, October 3rd at www.doi.gov/audio.html. Images from the ceremony and of the award recipients will be available upon request.

About Take Pride in America

Take Pride in America is a national partnership program established by the U.S. Department of the Interior that aims to engage, support and recognize volunteers who work to improve our public lands, including parks, forests, waterways, grasslands, wildlife refuges, cultural and historical sites, local playgrounds and other recreation areas.

Reintroduced in 2003 with more than 100 Charter Partners, Take Pride now engages Federal, state, and local governments; conservation, youth and recreation groups; and top national corporations and organizations. Together, we protect and enhance the special legacy all Americans share – our public lands that cover more than one in every three acres across the Nation. It's Your Land, Lend a Hand! For more information, visit www.TakePride.gov.

-- DOI --